

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 OMB-01
/061 W

-----071724Z 105863 /44

O R 071701Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4515
INFO USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 00372

DEPT: PLEASE PASS TO SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, SECRETARY
OF THE ARMY, SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE, CJCS, AND
USNMR SHAPE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, MILI, AWACS, GW, NATO
SUBJECT: GERMAN POLITICAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS NATO AEW

REFS: A. NATO 0059 JAN 77; B. BONN 21260 DEC 76;
C. BONN 21054 DEC 76

BEGIN SUMMARY: WE WOULD NOT GIVE TOO MUCH WEIGHT TO
THE SCHULZE AND DOMROESE ANALYSIS OF THE GERMAN
INTERNAL POLITICAL DYNAMICS INVOLVED IN FRG ATTITUDES
TOWARDS THE NATO AEW, PARTICULARLY CONCERNING CDU/CSU
MOTIVES. GERMAN GENERALS, TOO, HAVE POLITICAL AXES TO
GRIND. AS REPORTED IN BONN 21260, THE OPPOSITION
PARTIES WILL TAKE A VERY HARD LOOK AT THE NATO AEW
AND ITS FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS, ESPECIALLY AS TO WHAT
DEFENSE PROGRAMS WOULD HAVE TO BE SLASHED TO MAKE WAY
FOR THE NATO AEW.

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THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME OPPOSITION HAS PROBED
DEEPLY BEFORE APPROVING A MAJOR DEFENSE ACQUISITION
PROGRAM. THE OPPOSITION FEELS THAT THE SCHMIDT GOVERN-
MENT IS IN SERIOUS POLITICAL TROUBLE AND WILL USE
EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO CHALLENGE THE GOVERNMENT. EVEN
WITHIN THE SPD THERE ARE DOUBTS ABOUT THE NATO AEW
(BONN 21054), IT WILL BE NECESSARY FOR LEBER AND THE

GOVERNMENT TO MOVE CAUTIOUSLY IF THE BUNDESTAG IS TO APPROVE GERMAN PARTICIPATION IN THE NATO AEW PROGRAM. IF WE WANT LEBER TO SUCCEED IN OBTAINING LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL, WE WILL HAVE TO HAVE SOME UNDERSTANDING FOR HIS TIMING PROBLEM. END SUMMARY.

1. THE ANALYSIS GIVEN TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL LABERGE BY GENERALS SCHULZE AND DOMROESE AS TO THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL DYNAMICS IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC SEEMS TO US A BIT OFF THE MARK. IT IS TRUE THAT THE OPPOSITION WANTS TO HAVE A VERY HARD LOOK AT NATO AEW. HOWEVER, IN OUR JUDGMENT, THIS IS NOT BECAUSE OPPOSITION POLITICIANS FEAR THAT LEBER PREEMPTS THEIR POLITICAL POSITION BUT RATHER BECAUSE THE OPPOSITION PARTIES IN THE WAKE OF RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS HERE BELIEVE THE SPD/FDP GOVERNMENT IS WEAK AND CAN BE BROUGHT DOWN BEFORE THE 1980 ELECTIONS. THEY CAN BE EXPECTED TO USE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO CRITICIZE THE SCHMIDT GOVERNMENT. THIS INCLUDES ATTACKING LEBER, ONE OF THE FEW SPD MINISTERS WHOM THE OPPOSITION RESPECTS.

2. TRADITIONALLY, THE CDU/CSU HAS CHAMPIONED A STRONG NATO DEFENSE POSTURE BUT IN THIS CASE THEY MAY WELL USE THE ARGUMENT OF COST EFFECTIVENESS AS GROUNDS FOR THEIR DOUBTS ABOUT THE NATO AEW PROGRAM. THEY HAVE ALREADY ATTACKED LEBER FOR HIS HANDLING OF THE "GENERALS' AFFAIR" AND, GIVEN THE POLITICAL CLIMATE IN BONN, THEY WILL NOT BE PRESSURED INTO MAKING ANY QUICK DECISIONS

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4516
INFO USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 00372

ON NATO AEW, OR ANY OTHER COSTLY DEFENSE PROGRAMS.
THIS, BY THE WAY, IS NOT A DEPARTURE AS FAR AS MAJOR
DEFENSE ACQUISITION EXPENDITURES ARE CONCERNED. IN THE
CASE OF THE MRCA PROGRAM THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE
SCRUTINY BEFORE THE OPPOSITION APPROVED THE PROGRAM.

3. PERMREP PAULS' ASSERTION THAT THE GOVERNMENT CANNOT
PRESSURE THE BUNDESTAG INTO A QUICK FAVORABLE DECISION
ON NATO AEW REFLECTS THE POLITICAL REALITIES IN BONN.
THE GOVERNMENT HAS A SLIM TEN-SEAT MAJORITY AND THERE
ARE ALSO CRITICS OF THE NATO AEW PROGRAM WITHIN THE
SPD FRAKTION (BONN 21054). IT WILL BE NECESSARY FOR
THE GOVERNMENT TO PROCEED WITH CAUTION ON THIS CONTRO-
VERSIAL ISSUE AND TO TAKE WHATEVER TIME IS NECESSARY
TO LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR BUNDESTAG APPROVAL.

4. SOME GERMAN POLITICIANS SEE A LINKAGE BETWEEN USG-
FRG TANK HARMONIZATION AND THE NATO AEW PROGRAM. THEIR
ARGUMENT RUNS SOMETHING LIKE THE FOLLOWING:
THE AMERICANS ARE UNWILLING TO PURCHASE A SUPERIOR
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GERMAN PRODUCT AND AT THE SAME TIME THEY EXPECT US TO
ACCEPT, WITHOUT QUESTION, AN EXPENSIVE AND CONTROVERSIAL
AMERICAN PRODUCT. THIS ARGUMENT HAS CERTAIN POLITICAL
USEFULNESS AND IT IS A POLITICAL FACT OF LIFE WITH
WHICH WE MUST DEAL.

5. AS OFTEN REPORTED, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO
RECOGNIZE THE POLITICAL CONSTRAINTS WITH WHICH FRG
DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER IS FACED AND IF WE WANT THE
WEST GERMANS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NATO AEW PROGRAM,
WE MUST PERMIT THE GOVERNMENT ADEQUATE TIME TO GET THE
PROGRAM THROUGH THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS.
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